

“I’m fine, just busy...”
Lesson 9
How do we create boundaries?

Intro: What does air traffic control, highway lines, and your skin have somewhat in common? Boundaries...

The air traffic controller helps planes know what paths they can take and what altitudes they can take them to avoid a catastrophic collision with another airplane.

Highway lines or even concrete/grass medians give drivers clarity about lanes are proper (and should be safe) to travel in to avoid a wreck with another vehicle.

Your skin gives your internal organs/muscles/tissue boundaries and a barrier from what would be harmful to it externally.

The idea of boundaries, while perhaps given a negative or self-centered focus by our culture, are actually tools to facilitate our wellbeing.

God’s Word grants us perspective on the need for boundaries but with spiritual motivations and eternal perspective.

Consider so many of the imperatives on the NT-

-Seek first, present your bodies, you are bought with a price, press toward the mark, we are ambassadors, go, make disciples, etc.

These imperatives implicitly (sometimes explicitly) require us to think, filter, obey, and act upon God’s desire for us and others.

Through this process, healthy and holy boundaries must be established to honor and obey the Lord.

I. A Greater “Yes” Principle

- Often, when we consider the concept of boundaries, culture defines them in self-centered or fearful terms.
 - I need boundaries for my...wellbeing, mental health, time, hobbies, goals, etc.
 - I need boundaries, so I do not...get betrayed, waste my time, do not get hurt, have to be inconvenienced, have to change, etc.
- Let us consider that this is not a spiritual or godly way to consider the concept of boundaries.
 - With God, boundaries led to greater “yes(es)”.
 - Consider Genesis 1-2- God creates humanity (with innocence) for His glory with their intentional roles. He places a boundary for them to live by in regard to their free will and the forbidden tree.
 - The boundary was NOT rooted in sinfulness or selfishness; it was rooted in holiness and His goodness.
 - Boundaries with God are used to give clarity about what is holy and unholy.
 - They provide protection, direction, understanding, and enjoyment.
 - They allow us to either understand God’s desire about a matter or trust His nature is good even if we do not currently understand the boundary.
 - This principle is demonstrated throughout the Bible.
 - Ask yourself...what other commands or accounts in the OT alone demonstrate this principle?
 - Consider Col. 3:1-25- Having detailed the beauty of Christ’s superiority in chapter 2, Paul turns to the practical ramifications of being spiritually alive in Him.
 - Being alive means seeking the eternal desire of God for His glory in our lives and in the lives of those around us (vs. 1-4).
 - Being alive means we have the ability to see our old sin enslaved nature for what it was and deny it in the power of Christ (vs. 5-9).
 - Being alive means we have the understanding and opportunity to experience what God intends for us in Christ (vs. 10-25).

- Freed from prejudice- vs. 11.
- Freed to be fruitful towards other Christians- vs. 12-15.
- Freed to praise God- vs. 16-17.
- Freed to enjoy a new home dynamic- vs. 18-21.
- Freed to work for Christ regardless of the unjust environment- vs. 22-25.
- The “seeking things above/putting on” are good and require us to say no to pursuing this realm and our passions alone.
- Understanding the Scriptures and giving them jurisdiction in our lives practically helps us give the proper “weight” to decisions in life.

II. Learning to Say No...James 4:13-17

- Time has more value than any other resource, yet it is given away (or wasted) more freely than anything else.
 - In this series, we have already discussed technology and work as possible pitfalls regarding time.
 - There are many other ways to misuse time by giving too much of it over to a hobby, event, or person in way that does not align with God’s eternal values.
- Protect time to do nothing...
 - As emphasized in a previous lesson, rest matters.
 - Misusing time to commit to events, people, etc. at the expense of obeying God’s Word is not only harmful physically, but also spiritually.
- Build margin in your schedule.
 - Sometimes, in the pursuit of using time wisely, we attempt to plan and fill up our days/weeks ahead to “squeeze every last drop out.”
 - Though not immediately sinful (as was the case with the presumptuous, covetous folks in James 4), it can be eerily similar in the desire to control our time or maximize our time.
 - ASK YOURSELF: Does my calendar have so many filled spots that it cannot be shuffled to accommodate what God may want to do that week with someone for their spiritual betterment?
- Do less to connect with fewer on a deeper level.
 - One of the ironies of social media is the number of “friends” or “followers” everyone has.
 - String thin tether connecting folks but not built upon even a monthly basis face to face.

III. Am I trying to do what God does NOT expect me to do?¹

- With the need to submit to a “greater yes” and learn “to say no”, let us remind ourselves again of a trap that our culture (through the influence of the devil) has created- the need to be involved and the fear of missing out.
 - Stop expecting yourself to enjoy, experience, or absorb every opportunity possible.
- As we have highlighted previously, Jesus’ schedule included helping and teaching people...but it also meant not healing some people and moving on to teach somewhere else.
 - This example reminds us that God does NOT expect me to do EVERYTHING or be responsible for it...that is HIS jurisdiction.

¹ Deyoung, Kevin, Crazy Busy, Chapter 4.

- He does expect me to do more than what is within my stewardship and sphere of influence.
- A common pitfall- Because Christ transforms us and His Word informs us; we are motivated to help people and causes while also finding ourselves grieved (to the point of action) in matters of injustice.
 - This transformation and desire to help is commendable and appropriate for Christians.
 - Given our finite abilities, set amount of time each day, and limited resources, we must remember that caring is not ALWAYS synonymous with DOING something.
 - In short, embrace your gifting and embrace opportunities empowered by God's grace, do not feel guilty about what you cannot.
- How do I make holy, wise decisions about boundaries rather than selfish or carnal/temporal ones? There is no "plug and play" formula but a series of questions can help us discern how we are doing.
 - Will it impede your personal time in the Word and intentional prayer?
 - How am I currently stewarding the relationships God has given me? Will this choice limit or jeopardize my God given role with them?
 - Will this cause me to skip assembly times at my church or make it transactional in nature?
 - Is the amount of time this decision will require going to further a spiritual obligation or goal God has given me in the Word or detract it?
 - Do my boundaries and decisions flow from my identity in Christ or out of pride or the fear of man?
 - How will this decision promote me evangelizing someone else?
 - Does this decision demonstrate eternal sobriety (i.e.- I am living for eternity and not for the ideas or passions of this realm)?

IV. PSA to Parents- Stop freaking out about your kids...Eph. 6:1-4

- We have placed too much emphasis on how they will turn out as adults based upon what we give them or fail to give them as kids.
 - In experiences
 - In sports
 - In music
 - In possessions
 - In education
 - Ask yourself- what did God emphasize to parents in the OT? What is God's idea of "success" for your child and young adult?
- The upside-down family
 - If a parent's primary command and expectation from God is to foster an environment for the Gospel and towards Christ, then we must evaluate if our boundaries are helping that, hindering it, or stumbling it.
 - They are to be disciples, ambassadors, and spiritual warriors.
 - One of the most detrimental decisions you can make (and make again) is to be MOSTLY committed to the Lord.
 - This family goes to church mostly...they listen to Christian music or go to Christian school...they homeschool...they are thoughtful about their entertainment decisions mostly...they talk about spiritual matters sometimes...yet, what they allow to alter their intentionality in evangelism, their hospitality for the Gospel and their church, their commitment to the assembly, their principles with giving and usage of money, their attitude towards those they disagree with, their use of

words and tone in their home, etc. teach kids and young adults that Christianity is serious unless it interferes with something we want to do, how we feel, or calls us away from either.

- We have succumbed to a societal and devilish mindset about raising children to the point that the tyranny of children rules the home rather than parents intentionally pursuing what is most important for them...this is idolatry
- Stop trying to live up to the myth of "the perfect parent"...rules, expectations, cultural demands...
 - They are not fragile and destined to be failures...choose to help them in the most important way possible- spiritually.
 - Most studies show kids wish their parents were less tired, angry, and frantic.²
 - Your kid's future is NOT in your hands solely, but you bear the accountability for your spiritual role.
 - What I AM as a parent (in Christ and living it) is more crucial than what I DO or PROVIDE as a parent.

Conclusion: Boundaries are God's design and must be defined by His ideas. This will enable Gospel mindedness now and set a trajectory in motion for the next generation to treasure the same. It grants us both the ability to enjoy our time with the Lord but also enjoy the experience of being used by Him in the lives of others in our church and community.

What boundaries do you need to set up?

What boundaries do you need to obliterate?

² <https://theparentcue.org/what-your-kids-want-most-from-you/>